

**NICEC**

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## NICEC STATEMENT

The Fellows of NICEC agreed the following statement in 2010.

'The National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC) was originally founded as a research institute in 1975. It now plays the role of a learned society for reflective practitioners in the broad field of career education, career guidance/counselling and career development. This includes individuals whose primary role relates to research, policy, consultancy, scholarship, service delivery or management. NICEC seeks to foster dialogue and innovation between these areas through events, networking, publications and projects.

NICEC is distinctive as a boundary-crossing network devoted to career education and counselling in education, in the workplace, and in the wider community. It seeks to integrate theory and practice in career development, stimulate intellectual diversity and encourage transdisciplinary dialogue. Through these activities, NICEC aims to develop research, inform policy and enhance service delivery.

Membership and fellowship are committed to serious thinking and innovation in career development work. Membership is open to all individuals and organisations connected with career education and counselling. Fellowship is an honour conferred by peer election and signals distinctive contribution to the field and commitment to the development of NICEC's work. Members and Fellows receive the NICEC journal and are invited to participate in all NICEC events.

NICEC does not operate as a professional association or commercial research institute, nor is it organisationally aligned with any specific institution. Although based in the UK, there is a strong international dimension to the work of NICEC and it seeks to support reflective practice in career education and counselling globally.'

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The official title of the journal for citation purposes is *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* (Print ISSN 2046-1348; online ISSN 2059-4879). It is widely and informally referred to as 'the NICEC journal'. Its former title was *Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal*, ISSN 1472-6564, published by CRAC, and the final edition under this title was issue 25. To avoid confusion we have retained the numbering of editions used under the previous title.

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- Career development in education: schools, colleges, universities, adult education, public career services.
- Career development in the community: third age, voluntary, charity, social organisations, independent contexts, public career services.

It is designed to be read by individuals who are involved in career development-related work in a wide range of settings including information, advice, counselling, guidance, advocacy, coaching, mentoring, psychotherapy, education, teaching, training, scholarship, research, consultancy, human resources, management or policy. The journal has a national and international readership.



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Manuscripts are welcomed focusing on any form of scholarship that can be related to the NICEC Statement. This could include, but is not confined to, papers focused on policy, theory-building, professional ethics, values, reflexivity, innovative practice, management issues and/or empirical research. Articles for the journal should be accessible and stimulating to an interested and wide readership across all areas of career development work. Innovative, analytical and/or evaluative contributions from both experienced contributors and first-time writers are welcomed. Main articles should normally be 3,000 to 3,500 words in length and should be submitted to one of the co-editors by email. Articles longer than 3,500 words can also be accepted by agreement. Shorter papers, opinion pieces or letters are also welcomed for the occasional 'debate' section. Please contact the relevant issue co-editor(s) prior to submission to discuss the appropriateness of the proposed article and to receive a copy of the NICEC style guidelines. Final decisions on inclusion are made following full manuscript submission and a process of peer review.

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# Overview of this issue

Welcome to the October 2018 issue of the NICEC journal. The articles below were contributed in response to an open call for papers. It is once again a pleasure to report that innovative, creative, and engaging scholarship is thriving in our field.

**Peter Plant, Inger Marie Bakke and Lyn Barham** get the ball rolling with a timely call for 'geronto guidance' for older people. They are particularly interested in the support that is available around retirement arguing it is currently something of a blind spot in terms of a genuinely lifelong guidance system.

The second article from **Lisa Law** continues the theme of age and change. It uses an action research strategy to evaluate the delivery of a workshop for older students at a UK university. The workshop demonstrates a creative and successful example of practice for this key client group.

**Charles Jackson** argues for the value of career surveys drawing from his work with trainee doctors and medical students. The surveys, it is suggested, highlight the importance of the human touch and talking directly with other people about career issues. The article finishes with a set of conclusions about the value of career surveys.

**Steve Mowforth** extends the use of survey to small-scale qualitative research with generation z students at a British university. He argues that contemporary scene has moved on from attitudes and beliefs associated with what he terms the industrial state.

**Julia Yates** reports on some contemporary techniques in career coaching. These include visual tools, role play tools, possible selves technique, passengers on the bus technique, pre-designed frameworks, and client-generated maps.

**Debra Osborn and V. Casey Dozier** argue for the value of cognitive information processing theory in relation to interventions. They provide two case studies to illustrate the approach.

**Ingrid Bårdsdatter Bakke, Erik Haug and Tristram Hooley** provide a timely update on guidance developments in Norway. They propose an innovative approach to combining face-to-face and online guidance based on career learning and instructional design.

Our final article by **Cathy Brown and Tracey Wond** is devoted to the topic of career capitals. Two contrasting conceptions of capital are critically assessed. Drawing from this, they propose some ideas for the development of career capital using a case study.

This issue concludes with a book review of *Graduate Employability in Context: Theory, Research and Debate* edited by Ciaran Burke and Fiona Christie.

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Phil McCash, Editor

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# Building career mobility: A critical exploration of career capital

Cathy Brown & Tracey Wond

**Work** transitions can be stressful to those who experience them, and yet are happening more frequently, as the notion of a job for life fades. Ensuring smooth and successful work transitions is therefore in the direct interests of individuals and, indirectly, employers. Using the career capital construct, this article explores how work transitions can be better negotiated by individuals. After introducing career capital, the article progresses to critically review two theoretical frameworks of career capital. To illustrate the discussion, one individual, a business leader in a wider study we are undertaking, is introduced to exemplify and illuminate our discussion of career capital. The article concludes by offering strategies to support career capital development.



## Introduction

Career mobility is increasingly important. With growing commercial pressures on organisations, a job for life is perhaps less realistic for individuals than it once was (Tulgan, 2001), let alone lifetime employment with a single employer (Arthur, Khapova & Richardson, 2017). Instead, individuals are likely to have to transition between roles more frequently (Kambourov and Manovski, 2008), whilst seeking out opportunities within the careers landscape. Indeed, there have been several calls for more ‘intelligent careers’ in response to the changing work environment (Arthur Clamon, DeFillippi & Adams, 1995; Tempest & Coupland, 2016; Arthur, et al., 2017).

Inherent in several definitions and concepts of the career is an acknowledgement that careers comprise sequences of work activities or employment (see Ashforth & Saks, 1995; Arnold, 1997), these sequences are punctuated with work transitions. Work

transitions can include a range of moves including upwards and sideward (lateral) moves, either inside an individual’s current organisation or across organisations. Here, career mobility is defined as the individual’s ability to undertake such role transitions. Having such mobility and undertaking work transitions can be stressful for individuals (Baruch, 2006). Experiencing such transitions requires both physical and mental adjustments to routines, networks, training needs, identity and attitude (Ashforth & Saks, 1995; Clarke, 2009; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). For some, transitions may expose fragility, prompting the need for introspection, re-evaluation and the creation of new career narratives (Clarke, 2009).

The likelihood and potential impact of these work transitions on individuals gives rise to further exploration of both the nature of transitions and relevant aspects of personal resources that aid an individual’s role transition. Here, such personal resources are defined as career capital. Awareness of career capital, and relevant development, cultivation and leveraging of career capital could support individuals to make successful work transitions.

This article draws upon learning from a wider, ongoing doctoral study which explores the career capital that business leaders need to facilitate role transitions within an organisation. The wider study uses a case study approach comprising face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with 36 business leaders who had recently made internal role transitions in a UK-based construction company. The interviews explored aspects that had supported and hindered internal role transitions, and the participants’ identification of additional support they perceived might have helped them. By adopting a case study design, it lends itself to bringing in-depth understanding to a complex, particular real-life phenomenon (Gaya & Smith, 2016), such as business leaders’ role transition experiences.

Such understanding can lead to the creation of context-dependent knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2011) and a source of expertise and insight (Yin, 2009, 2012), that can both stimulate learning and be transferrable to new situations (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Hyett, Kenny & Dickson-Swift, 2014). In particular, one business leader is used to illustrate the importance of career capital during work transitions. To preserve his anonymity we refer to him as Colin throughout this article. Colin emerged as a role model in the way in which he leveraged elements of his career capital to make an effective work transition. We will next explore career capital through critiquing two theoretical frameworks before moving on to exemplify this through exploring Colin's transition experience.

## Career capital

Career capital is not a new concept and has been explored previously in professional development and career management contexts (Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Felker & Gianecchini, 2015; Zikic, 2015; Tempest & Coupland, 2016). Yet, the concept still remains relatively under-used and few have explored what this means in particular contexts and work situations (such as during work transitions). The term, 'career capital' was first introduced by Arthur, Inkson and Pringle (1999), following earlier identification of career competencies (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Put simply, career capital refers to competencies that support individuals to build their careers and can be defined as 'the overall set of non-financial resources a person is able to bring to his or her work' (Arthur, DeFillippi & Jones, 2001: 101). The concept of career capital helps

us to define and understand how individuals use their resources and competencies in the context of their career.

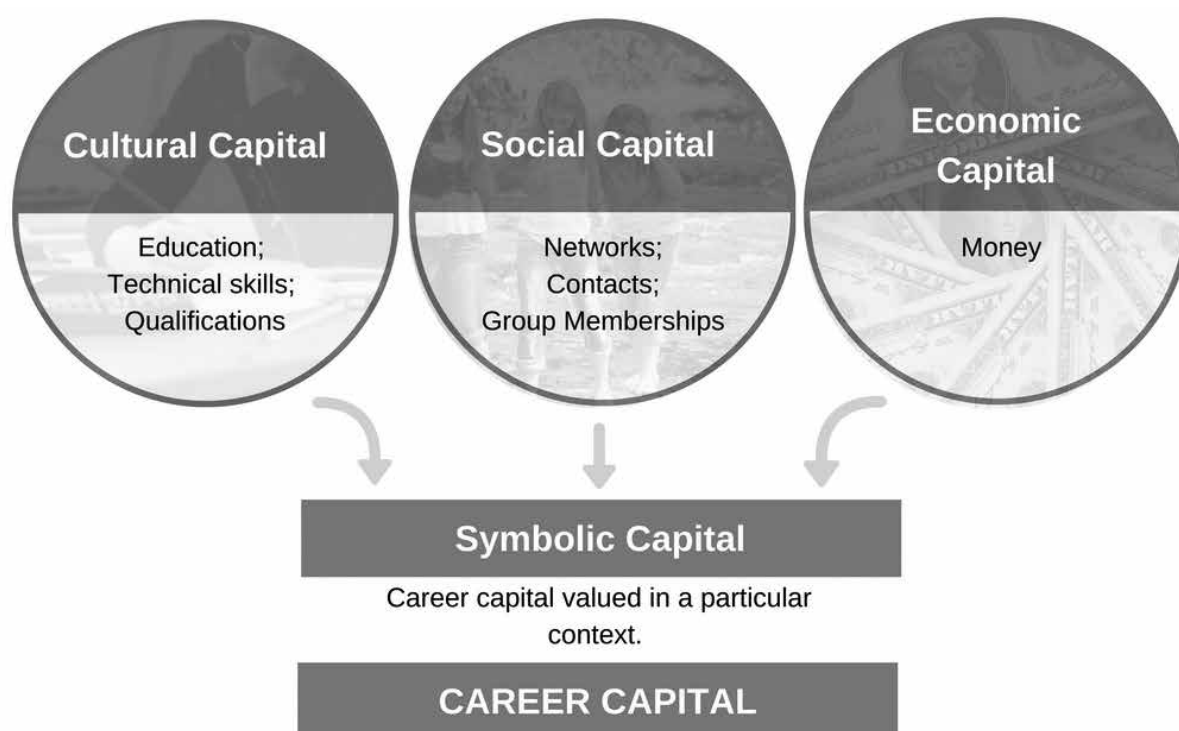
DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) identified three career competencies/capabilities at an individual level: 'Knowing-Why', 'Knowing-How', and 'Knowing-Whom'. These three competencies and capabilities contribute to our overall career capital.

'Knowing-Why' includes knowing beliefs, values, purpose and interests and shapes motivation; 'Knowing-How' comprises occupational knowledge, expertise and skills; 'Knowing-Whom' denotes networks and interpersonal relationships that support contacts, learning and reputation via social capital (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). These three 'forms of knowing' are regarded as the currency of an individual's career capital (Arthur et al, 1995: 9; Inkson & Arthur, 2001) (see Figure 1).

DeFillippi and Arthur's (1994) model has some limitations as the categories can be ambiguous; full definitions of the 'Knowing-Why', 'Knowing-How' and 'Knowing-Whom' were omitted. In addition, by purely emphasising the network structure, 'Knowing-Whom' has a narrow scope; it misses out references to the resources or potential resources available through this structure, as often acknowledged within social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986). Also, it only makes reference to the cultural context within 'Knowing-Whom' through emphasising the family network as a resource. What is omitted is the wider, cultural consideration of the role of family within upbringing and its impact

**Figure 1: Representation of DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) (Source: Authors' own)**





**Figure 2: Representation of Iellatchitch et al. (2003) (Source: Authors' own)**

on our cultural capital development as an individual. Finally, it is a static theory and fails to recognise the dynamism and movement that is emphasised with Bourdieu's capital work, e.g. how can 'Knowing-Why' generate 'Knowing-How'?

Iellatchitch, Mayrhofer and Meyer (2003) offer an alternative career capital framework. They acknowledge how our cultural background and economic resources, as well as our social networks impact our investment into our career capital. Iellatchitch, et al.'s (2003) framework is underpinned by Pierre Bourdieu's capital theory which identifies social capital such as social networks, resources and reputation (see Figure 2).

Showing parallels with DeFillippi and Arthur, cultural capital includes our educational background, technical skills and qualifications (Knowing-How); whilst social capital comprises our networks, contacts and group memberships (Knowing-Whom). Economic capital denotes our money (Mayrhofer, Iellatchitch, Meyer, Steyrer, Schiffinger & Strunk, 2004: 875). Moreover, Iellatchitch et al. (2003) acknowledge how career capital holds different value depending on the context, whether this be within a particular

organisation or within another area of the careers market. Consequently, symbolic capital is defined as the career capital that is recognised as valuable within a career field (Iellatchitch et al., 2003). In addition, the circularity of career capital is recognised, where career capital aspects can be applied to generate additional career capital. Despite these additions, Iellatchitch et al.'s model does have weaknesses. The terms can be difficult to define and use, in particular symbolic capital (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009). Also, it assumes that individual development of career capital is hampered by: upbringing or socialisation (Mayrhofer Meyer, Steyrer & Langer, 2007), genetics and class (Iellatchitch, et al., 2003), as emphasised in Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence where certain cultural values or ideology (such as gender) can be normalised (Connolly & Healy, 2004). Such hindrances reduce an individual's ability to develop in these areas.

From these two career capital frameworks, there are several points to note about career capital.

- Career capital can be applied to individuals or organisations: Career capital can be applied to individual growth, including personal development (Felker & Gianecchini, 2015) and

career management (Tempest & Coupland, 2016), as well as organisation contexts, such as organisational change (Arthur et al., 1999) and talent management (Zikic, 2015);

- Career capital is context-dependent: Career capital is dependent on the work environment and varies in different contexts. For instance, an individual's career capital may be better valued in one situation than others;
- Career capital may be transported and transferrable: Whilst more 'bounded' aspects of career capital are valued solely within specific situations, 'boundaryless' forms of career capital (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996: 124) can be transferred to new situations thereby supporting personal mobility;
- Career capital can be reinvested and scaled up: Career capital is extendable; it could be invested to generate additional career capital (Iellatchitch, et al., 2003). For instance, an individual may share their know-how with a contact in their network so as to strengthen the relationship.

## Colin

Working within the case organisation, Colin described in his interview how he had instigated a cross-functional role move from one department to another. Colin had recognised and identified his own career aspirations, interests, and future needs and initiated this cross-team transfer ('Knowing-Why'). Such an inter-functional team transition was rare, with only three of the 36 business leaders undertaking such a move. With a challenging previous line manager seeking to retain him, Colin showed tenacity and influence ('Knowing-How') to overcome this force and overcome this silo-mentality.

Also, he could be seen to use social forms of capital in order to support his work transition. His relationship with his new line manager ('Knowing-Whom'), a key contact within his internal work network, was core to his transition and the success of his transition experience. In particular, his line manager approved the financial investment – or economic capital – to pay for Colin to complete a diploma which helped to build further his know-how and cultural capital in the form of a formal qualification:

One of the things that I negotiated was that they had offered to pay for a [diploma]. They said 'Yes, we will support you.' I just thought 'wow!'

I had just finished the diploma, the [technical specialism] diploma, and I was armed with all of this information which I could now go and apply [...] it is kind of turning up to lay a carpet with a full tool box rather than an empty tool box [...] I knew the kind of best practice approach because I had seen case studies and read the conceptual frameworks and the different books and studies and so that helped me to form the foundation.

(Colin, Interviewee)

Colin's metaphorical use of 'toolkit' was also interesting to observe. Colin appeared to be able to recognise the variety of competencies and capabilities (tools) available to him (in his 'toolkit'/ portfolio), to support his transition. Without realising it, Colin had acknowledged the importance of developing and using his career capital.

Furthermore, Colin's new line manager represented him well within the Executive discussions, which built further his reputation across the business ('Knowing-Whom'):

She [...] acted as an advocate when we went to the [executive meeting] [...] so some of the things was building credibility, and I suppose that may be where building quick wins came from. 'So how can you build credibility?' 'Well let's have some quick wins' [...] it helped me build credibility in the role and recognition of me in the role.

(Colin, Interviewee)

The support from his new line manager developed Colin's self-confidence further and enabled him to advise key stakeholders:

So that helped me to build confidence and people because they knew me, they asked me for advice and every time they asked me for advice, and I gave advice and someone benefited from it, I was building confidence and it happened more and more.

(Colin, Interviewee)



## *Building career mobility: A critical exploration of career capital*

This led to a positive developmental spiral of confidence, reputation and know-how building. Experiencing no transition barriers and requiring no additional support, Colin 'took a few weeks' to settle; 'I don't think the team, or [line manager] could have done any more', Colin later remarked in his interview. Moreover, the new line manager aided the previous line manager to secure a new team member to backfill Colin, thereby easing the opposing forces of silo-mentality. Within six months of undertaking the interview, Colin left the organisation and secured a more senior role.

Colin's role transition story illustrates how central his relationship with his new line manager was to his success. Colin leveraged this supportive relationship to develop his career capital directly through financial investment in his diploma as well as actively building his reputation within the Executive team. Moreover, this support indirectly helped Colin to build his self-confidence which enabled him to perform well and enhance his reputation even further. Collectively, these educational, relational and reputational elements supported Colin to make his work transitions (and in the case of the first internal move, to settle quickly). On leaving the business and securing a more senior role, he demonstrated how his symbolic capital was transferrable and valued within both the previous and new employment contexts.

## Developing career capital

Our learning from career capital theory through the wider study, and exemplified by Colin, provides us with an understanding of how career capital could be leveraged to support work transitions. We also saw Colin, and others in the study, develop their career capital. Acknowledging the nature and characteristics of career capital explored earlier, and the findings of our wider study, five strategies emerge to support the development of career capital in the contexts of work transitions:

- **Trading strategies** – it may be possible to exchange aspects of our own career capital with others (Lin & Huang, 2005). For example, we may be able to share some technical expertise with a colleague and in return receive coaching to build our levels of personal motivation;

- **Investing economic capital** – we may choose to cultivate further our know-how through investing economic capital in additional development, as illustrated by Colin who, on moving into a new role, negotiated a company-sponsored diploma;
- **Leveraging key relationships to build reputation** – it may be plausible to work with our existing key contacts to develop ways of building further our personal reputation, similar to Colin who leveraged his line manager relationship to build his reputation with the executive team;
- **Drawing upon others to gain additional capital** – people within our networks may be willing to support our development whether this is through building further our capabilities, skills or contacts (Lin & Huang, 2005). For example, our connections may be happy to share their know-how, as well as introducing us to members of their networks that may help us (i.e. Knowing-Whom);
- **Reflection and self-learning** – introducing self-development habits within our life can support the development of our own capabilities and strengths (Hooley & Barham, 2015). For example, journaling and meditation may increase our own levels of self-awareness and self-management, which may lead us to understand our development path.

## Building career mobility

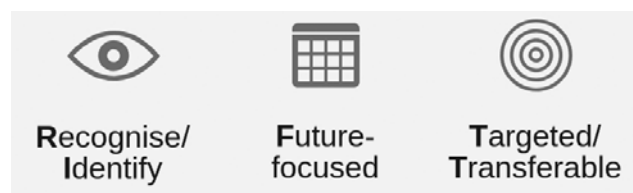
The acknowledgement and manipulation of career capital can support individuals to make work transitions. Our wider study observed conscious attempts by business leaders, such as Colin, to build resources within his career capital portfolio or toolkit. Pro-activity, self-awareness and the possession of transferable aspects of capital were evident amongst those who transitioned successfully. Learning from this, we therefore propose three sequential development prompts (that we assign the acronym of RI-F-TT), that can aid development of career capital when approaching work transitions (see Figure 3).

- **Recognise (R) and Identify (I):** It is critical that individuals take stock of their future career. Individuals need to identify their interests,

values, future needs, and ultimately, their career aspirations. They must also recognise that career capital is context-dependent. Without understanding this, career capital cannot be consciously planned and developed. Colin, for instance, was able to recognise rather objectively the tools from his metaphorical toolkit he needed to make the move he wanted and instigated;

- **Future-focused (F):** Individuals should give consideration to the future career field they wish to operate in, and have a strong appreciation of the emerging trends in this field. Such an assessment may identify high value career capital items (Tempest & Coupland, 2016) that will be critical for such forthcoming career transitions, as well as low value, obsolete career capital aspects (Arthur et al., 1999) that can be let go of. Emerging career capital needs can therefore be addressed;
- **Targeted (T) and Transferable (T):** Individuals should build targeted and transferrable career capital. Having predicted the emerging career capital that will be valued, a focused approach to building career capital can be taken. It will be important to ensure that this will be transferable into different situations and employers within this career field, rather than it being anchored to one particular setting. Colin's diploma built valuable knowledge and cultural capital that could be transferred into his new role, and later to his new employer.

By taking a considered and planned approach, individuals can build greater levels of personal work mobility into targeted areas.



**Figure 3: RI-F-TT - Development prompts for career capital development (Source: Authors' own)**

## Conclusion

The frequency of transitions between roles and employers is increasing for role holders and often these can be experienced as stressful. Consequently, transition management is becoming an increasingly important skill for individuals to cultivate.

Career capital can act as a resource that individuals can develop to facilitate their transitions between roles and employers, where the opportunities exist within the careers landscape. Moreover, focused and conscious attempts to develop critical and emerging career capital may help individuals to realise their aspirations and to support their development of physical and psychological mobility within a particular career field. We observed Colin do this.

Career capital theory has explored how we draw from key competencies and resources in order to support our career management and development into particular career fields. In addition, it emphasises how career capital can be developed through considered investment and application. As part of a wider study, the use of career capital to support voluntary organisational work transitions within a UK-business is being explored. Future avenues of research could include currently unexplored work transition experiences, for example involuntary role transitions within an organisation.



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